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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; AMIA CASE; MIDDLE EAST; VENEZUELAN
PRESIDENT CHAVEZ; 07/30/07

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend international stories cover the USG praise for Argentina's cooperation in the AMIA terrorist bombing investigation; US policy in the Middle East; and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez's "perpetual presidency," along the lines of that of Argentine former President Juan Domingo Peron.

2. OPINION PIECES AND EDITORIALS

- "The US praises (Argentina's) cooperation in the AMIA case"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion's" Washington-based correspondent, Hugo Alconada Mon, writes (07/28) "Except for a last-minute change, the US House of Representatives will make public its support for the progress made in the investigation of the AMIA bombing case, will congratulate the Argentine Government for 'having accelerated the rhythm of the investigation' and for having passed the new antiterrorist legislation.

"The support will be made public through a unanimous resolution that will also include a request to Interpol and the rest of the international community to support Argentina by 'detaining and extraditing any Iranian government official or former government official, Hezbollah agents or Islamic militants' through international warrants for their capture.

"Draft resolution 188/07 was promoted by the head of the Republican Party in the Foreign Relations Committee, Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, and it was later supported by the head of the Committee, Democratic Tom Lantos.

"... The AMIA bombing case is one of the central issues that raise most interest in Washington about Argentina, both for its direct ties to the Jewish community in the country and the alleged responsibility of Hezbollah and other enemies of the US."

- "The real story"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," opines (07/29) "As everyone knows, Islam has two huge branches - Sunnis and Shiites. Since the Shiites have influence in Lebanon, make a majority in Iraq, rule Iran and gained importance as never before due to the (Persian) Gulf war disaster, Washington has now decided that the road is arming Sunnis to destroy the others - period...

"The most serious danger posed by this measure is that it will add tons of fuel to the civil war in Iraq...

"Today, the terrorist enemy has multiplied itself hand in hand with a demolishing anti-US feeling in the Arab world. In this way, the

assessment of the situation is doubly negative. It is clear that there is not such a thing as an Al Qaeda network to fight. Instead, a number of fascist ultra-Islamic groups have increased since the invasion (of Iraq) and the terminal crisis in the Palestinian territories. What Washington still has not noticed is that the West has common enemies with Arabs and Persians in those territories. When the anti-terrorist struggle is seriously carried out (which has not happened until now), an alliance with those borders will be inevitable."

- "The perpetual presidency"

Natalio R. Botana, contributor to daily-of-record "La Nacion," opines (07/29) "... The modern republic has always meant... sovereignty of the people and power limitation. However, this did not mean that the president could not be reelected as many times as necessary... Nonetheless, during the Second World War, Franklin D. Roosevelt obtained a third and fourth term in office. This is why later on re-election in the US was limited to only one consecutive term.

"In the Southern Cone this system was implemented with the variant of re-election following an intermediate period or by adding two terms in office with the possibility of attempting to get reelected after an intermediate period. In any event, what these constitutions seek is avoiding the trap of perpetual re-election...

"...With Chavez in Venezuela a phenomenon is taking place that is similar to that in Argentina with Peron - far from reducing popular support, the exercise of presidency increases it...

"... Could perhaps perpetual presidency evolve towards a competitive presidency in the framework of a neutral State and a pluralist regime? It is difficult to dismiss this riddle, although its resolution largely depends on the stability of the region and the existence of bridges of dialogue between two concepts of democracy -

hegemonic and Republican democracy.

"The tradition of perpetual presidency has strong roots and is hard to defeat. It does not appear by chance - it is the daughter of our history and is always lurking in some countries (ours among them) more than in others. On a regional level, this issue calls for diplomatic caution and intelligence."

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